

What is tombstoning?

Tombstoning is when a person jumps from a height into water.

The title was adopted because of the way a person falls and plunges into deep water, in a similar way a stone would.

Unfortunately over recent years people have been killed or seriously injured when tombstoning.

This leaflet offers some essential advice for those considering tombstoning.

Why can tombstoning be dangerous?

Tombstoning offers a high-risk, high-impact experience but it can have severe and life-threatening consequences. This is because:

- Water depths alter with the tide - the water may be shallower than it seems
- Submerged objects like rocks may not be visible - these can cause serious impact injuries
- Getting out of the water is often much more difficult than people realise
- Strong currents can rapidly sweep people away

Beware of Cold Water Shock that can leave even the fittest person struggling in water - **float to live.**

What can you do?

Don't jump into the unknown.
Consider the dangers:

- **Check for hazards in the water.** Rocks or other objects may be submerged and difficult to see
- **Check the depth of the water.** Remember tides can rise and fall very quickly
- As a rule of thumb, **a jump of ten metres requires a water depth of at least five metres**, but this cannot be relied upon
- **Never jump whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs**
- **Check for access** - It may be impossible to get out of the water
- **Consider the risks to yourself and others.** Conditions change rapidly - check swell and tide times; you won't enjoy it if you jump when you don't feel safe; children may be watching and try to copy you. Is it safe for them?



Information extracted from The Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) www.rospa.com

Coastal Emergency dial 999
and ask for the Coastguard

Inland Waters dial 999
and ask for Fire and Rescue

Parental responsibility

If you are a parent, are you aware of what activities your children are engaged in and the risks they expose themselves and others to?

Who is harmed and what type of accidents happen?

Injuries and deaths as a result of tombstoning are an issue nationally.

The most serious cases were looked at in more detail, of these:

- 85% were male
- Teenagers were involved in just over half the cases (55%), followed by those in their 20s (25%) with 20% of incidents involving people aged over 30 years
- All of the known alcohol-related incidents involved males aged over 40 (which accounted for three of the fatal incidents)
- Of the non-fatal incidents, spinal and limb injuries (both at 20%) were most commonly reported
- Many of the non-fatal incidents have resulted in life-changing injuries and they required significant resources from the rescue services. Young and older fathers were among the fatalities, along with at least three teenagers

*National information from internet sources

Further information:

The below organisations have more information on how to keep safe in and around water.

- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) – visit www.rnli.org
- HM Coastguard – visit www.hmcoastguard.uk
- Royal Lifesaving Society UK (RLSS) – visit www.rlss.org.uk



**SAFER
TORBAY**

**DON'T JUMP
INTO THE
UNKNOWN**

Cliff/harbour jumping

Information about the dangers of tombstoning

Working together to keep Torbay safe

Torbay Council • Devon and Cornwall Police
NHS Devon • Probation Service
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service